

# Principles Of Missionary Calling

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Acts 16th chapter of the Bible consists of the Missionary journey of Paul and we can learn some principles from his life and journey.

**1. Ministry of Paul:** The ministry of Paul was to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ all around the world. He started his missionary journey with Timothy from Lystra. They went to various places strengthening the churches already formed by the apostles and traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia-Acts 16:1-6.

**2. Yielding to the Spirit of God:** When they traveled through the province of Asia the Spirit of God did not allow them to preach the word. And Paul could not speak in the regions of Asia and Mysia. God did not allow them to enter Bythinia while passing through the border of Mysia. So they passed by Mysia and went to Troas. While he was in Troas, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him to come to Macedonia and help them. So, immediately, they got ready to leave for Macedonia and sailed for Samothrace, Neapolis and traveled to Philippi from there – Acts 16: 6-12.

**3. Hardships of the journey:** Paul and his companions walked in missionary journey with their packs of belongings on their backs not knowing exactly where to go and where to stay. All they did was to look for the Lord's direction and they were committed to their calling. Paul describes some of his hardships in 2corinthians 6th chapter. He experienced and endured the perils of water, storms, ship wreck, perils of robbers, perils of own country men and heathen, perils of city, beatings, slashes, false brethren, hunger, fasting and nakedness for the sake of the gospel of Christ.

In Galatia he was completely ill and was restricted to bed. God would close the doors through circumstances like disease and robbery and in spite of his testing period, struggle and conflict; God guided and enabled him to press in westward direction towards Macedonia.

Most of us face periods of testing and do not know which way to take and we may even feel that God has forgotten and forsaken us and not leading us. But we need to understand that, testing, trials and hindrances are a part of the leading of God. Isaiah 51:10 says, "Who among you fears the lord and obeys his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, trust in the name of the lord and rely on his God." Trusting God when there is no light and when it is complete darkness; obeying him and holding onto Him has so much to do in our lives. No matter what our circumstances and situations are but there is no time in the life of a Christian when one is separated from the presence God; we can trust him and He will lead us into light.

**4. Results of obedience to God's direction:** In this way the Spirit of God brought Paul and the party until they came to the city of Troas, the farthest western point in Asia. Then Paul had the vision of Macedonia and as they set out, Luke the author of Acts joined them in the missionary journey. They all obeyed the Spirit of God and from that time there was a definite change in their course. The wanderings, ups and downs, the indecisions and confusion seem to have come to a halt and they had a straight course as God made circumstances favorable for them to enter into Macedonia, straight into Philippi.

When Paul entered Philippi, Paul might have searched for a new person who would be able to receive Christ and share the gospel. But God led the team to a bunch of women who were at the river out side the city gate and they started sharing the gospel with them and a lady from Thyatira named Lydia accepted the Lord as God opened her heart to respond to Paul's gospel message; and the members of her household

got baptized; and she opened up her house for the team to stay and continue the missionary work. And so Lydia, a woman became a channel for the spread of the gospel in Europe.

In John 4:10 we see the Samaritan woman believing Christ and leading the whole village to the feet of Jesus even before the incident of cross happened. Women can spread the flavor of Jesus Christ through their loving and sober spirit.

Opening our homes for the servants of the Lord and for the young Christian believers to get encouraged and nourished is one of the greatest ministries a family can have. Around us are hearts which are prepared to Jesus Christ and all they need is some one to tell them about Jesus so that they may receive Him.

**5. True witnessing:** Once Paul and the team were met by a slave girl who had spirit by which she predicted the future and she earned a great deal of money fro her owners by fortune telling. This girl followed Paul and the team shouting, “These men are the servants of the High God who are telling you the way to be saved.” When she kept this doing for many days, one day Paul was grieved and commanded the spirit in the name of Jesus to come out of the girl. The owners of the girl had become furious as their business got collapsed and they handed over Paul and Silas to the magistrates; and Paul and Silas were ordered to be stripped and beaten; severely flogged and thrown into prison with their feet fastened in the stocks in the prison.

We see an identical situation in Mark 5th chapter where Jesus drives out a group of demons from a man who possessed them as he shouted, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” In these two situations we see the demons witnessing Jesus Christ as the son of the Most High God. But God does not need the testimony of Satan and He needs people who are true witnesses and who are true in heart. Two basic ways of attack of Satan are through indirect subtle approach and the other is direct interactive approach. The direct interactive approach brings glory to God as we see in the case of Paul in this chapter 16 of the book of Acts.

The scene of praying and singing by Paul and Silas in the prison despite their bodily affliction is the triumph of Christianity and the experience of burning bush where in the Christian will never be consumed by any affliction or distress. God puts in his saints the ability to sing and praise in suffering. While they were singing, there happened a violent earth quake and the jailer tried to kill himself thinking that the prisoners had escaped but Paul assured him not to be afraid and that they were there in the prison itself. Through this incident the jailer came to know the Lord; and his family was baptized and got added to the church.

**6. Call of Paul:** Paul had his call to serve the Lord while he was on the road to Damascus. His call was not to Macedonia or Troas or any province but his call was to preach the word of God and to be His witness all of his life time. In Acts 9: 15, 16 we see the calling of Paul from heaven – “But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go, this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and the kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” In Galatians 1: 15, 16 Paul says, “But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.” In Acts 22:14&15 we see Ananias telling Paul, “The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.”

We all have confusion about God’s calling to preach and to be a missionary. Our call is to know Jesus and to make Him known everyone. Every person who accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and savior has the

calling to be His witness irrespective of time and place during his life on earth. This call is the same for every believer but the direction will differ and will be according to the leading of the Spirit of God.

There is a picture in Ecclesiastes of Christ standing at the door and knocking: He says, “Open my sister, my beloved, my spouse”, but the bride or the Christian is on bed in warm covers and comfort and refused to get up and open the door to the calling of the Lord. Later she repented, opened the door and found that he was gone. There was no longer the wooing, gentle calling and directive ‘come follow me.’ And it took her a long time in searching before she ever found and had communion with her beloved again. Are we willing to respond and available to be directed by the spirit of God regardless of the cost to be directed by him to any place or circumstance?